Cold Weather and Winter Driving in Texas for Soldiers, Civilians and Family Members

PREVENTION

All too often we focus on recognizing and treating cold weather injuries. However, the more important issue is prevention. Consequently leaders at all levels, Soldiers, civilians, and family members should be trained on the following precautions and supervisory responsibilities to prevent cold weather injuries:

PREVENTION
(Continued)

- Enforce the buddy system for everyone: Soldiers, civilians, and family members.
- Check each individual for proper dress (gloves; loose, layered clothing).
- Ensure proper hygiene is practiced.

PREVENTION
(Continued)

- Never allow anyone to unnecessarily wear wet clothing, ensure socks are changed regularly.
- Identify and closely monitor personnel who have previously suffered a cold-weather injury (more susceptible).
- Remind everyone that alcohol consumption increases the risk of cold weather injuries and slows reaction time.

SIGNS SYMPTOMS AND FIRST-AID

When prevention fails it is critical that **everyone** be able to recognize and treat cold-weather injuries.

FROSTBITE

Frostbite is caused by freezing of tissue, normally due to exposure below 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

Seek treatment even if suspected.

FROSTBITE SYMPTOMS

Loss of sensation in affected area; tingling, blistered, swollen, or tender areas; pale, yellowish, waxy-looking skin.

FROSTBITE FIRST-AID

- Warm the affected area with direct body heat.
- Do not massage or rub the area, get it wet, use ice or snow, or expose the affected area to fire, or other source of intense heat.
- Evacuate to medical facility.

IMMERSION FOOT
(TRENCH FOOT)

Immersion Foot (Trench Foot) is caused by prolonged exposure of feet to wet conditions at temperatures between 32 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Inactivity and damp socks and boots (or tightly laced boots that impair circulation) speed the onset and severity.

IMMERSION FOOT SYMPTOMS

Cold feet, which may become numb; feet may later feel hot with shooting pain. There may also be swelling, redness, and bleeding.

IMMERSION FOOT FIRST AID

- Re-warm feet by exposing them to warm air, evacuate victim for medical attention.
- Do not massage, rub, moisten, or expose affected area to intense heat.

DEHYDRATION

Dehydration, which is the depletion of body fluids, is just as common in cold weather as it is in hot.

DEHYDRATION SYMPTOMS

- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Headaches
- Blurred vision

DEHYDRATION FIRST AID

Always drink plenty of water especially during and after extended physical activity. Remember cola, tea, and coffee are diuretics.

HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia is a life-threatening situation caused by prolonged cold exposure and body-heat loss. This may occur at temperatures well above freezing, especially when a person is immersed in water.

HYPOTHERMIA SYMPTOMS

Shivering stops

Drowsiness

Mental slowness

Loss of coordination

Unconsciousness

Irregular heartbeat.

HYPOTHERMIA FIRST-AID

Strip off wet clothing, wrap victim in blankets or put in sleeping bag, get victim to heated location, evacuate to medical facility.

CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon Monoxide is a poisonous gas that is most commonly generated by exhaust fumes from vehicles or other internal combustion engines.

CARBON MONOXIDE SYMPTOMS

- Headache
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Unconsciousness

CARBON MONOXIDE FIRST-AID

Move affected person to fresh air, summon medical assistance, administer artificial respiration if required.

WINTER DRIVING

Whether driving a privately-owned or Army Motor Vehicle, the most important step to consider in winter driving is vehicle preparation. Without proper preparation you may find yourself, your Soldiers, or a loved one stranded and in a life-threatening situation.

VEHICLE PREPARATION

- Check radiator hoses
- Check Tires
- Check Heater/Defog
- Check Wipers
- Check Exhaust system
- Check Eng Thermostat
- Check antifreeze
- Check all lights
- Check battery
- Check the radio
- Check Oil and Filter
- Tune up for winter

VEHICLE OPERATION

Winter driving in Texas calls for an extra margin of caution, skills, and alertness. Be sure your vehicles are properly maintained and that you carry emergency equipment for cold weather. Remember that traction is a key point and to adjust your speed and following distance to allow you to maintain full control.

VEHICLE OPERATION
(Continued)

- Drive defensively
- Plan more time to get where you are going
- See and be seen
- Winter tire requirements may be different
- Braking and skidding require special techniques, know them and be prepared

VEHICLE OPERATION

(Continued)

SHOULD YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A SKID, TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

REAR WHEEL DRIVE: Remain calm, slowly remove your foot from the gas pedal, pump the brakes with light touches, keep the car in gear turn the wheels into the skid and steer gently and if a counter skid occurs repeat the process.

VEHICLE OPERATION

(Continued)

SHOULD YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A SKID, TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

FRONT WHEEL DRIVE: Again, remain calm, keep your foot on the accelerator (do not decelerate), turn the wheels into the skid, do not touch the brakes and steer gently. The reason we don't decelerate with front wheel drive is to keep the rear end from overtaking the front, causing a spin-out.

The Facts

The #1 killer of our Soldiers, civilians, and family members is still POV's (speed, fatigue, drivers skill, and alcohol)

More than 1,000 people are killed in Texas in alcohol related traffic fatalities every year.

48% of all traffic related fatalities in Texas last year were NOT wearing seatbelts.

The Law in Texas

Penalties for 1st DWI offense:

- Up to $2,000 fine
- 72 hours - 6 months in jail
- Loss of your license for up to one year
- $1,000 annual fee for three consecutive years to retain your driver's license

REMEMBER

- #1 -- Be prepared before you begin
- Use Composite Risk Management, regardless the mission
- Winterize your vehicle, now
- Always use the buddy system
- Drive defensively
- Know the symptoms and first-aid for cold weather injuries

RISK MANAGEMENT

THE LIFE YOU SAVE
JUST MIGHT BE YOUR OWN

QUESTIONS?